

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A valve packing removal device for use in a sliding stem valve having a valve stem, a valve plug coupled to the valve stem, and a packing box, the valve packing removal device, comprising:

a substantially cylindrical housing adapted to be removably secured to a portion of the valve stem disposed between the valve plug and the packing box of the sliding stem valve, the substantially cylindrical housing having an outer surface, an inner surface, and a hollow interior, the outer surface having a diameter less than a diameter of the packing box of the valve, the inner surface having a diameter corresponding to a diameter of the valve stem, wherein at least a portion of the housing is disposed between an end of the valve plug and the packing box.

2. (original) The valve packing removal device of claim 1, wherein the substantially cylindrical housing includes first and second halves forming a sleeve adapted to be secured around the valve stem.

3. (original) The valve packing removal device of claim 2, further including a snap ring having a longitudinal gap therein, the sleeve being securable to the valve stem by introducing the sleeve through the gap and deflecting the snap ring around the sleeve.

4. (original) The valve packing removal device of claim 1, wherein the substantially cylindrical housing is made of metal.

5. (original) The valve packing removal device of claim 1, wherein the substantially cylindrical housing is made of plastic.

6. (original) The valve packing removal device of claim 1, wherein the substantially cylindrical housing is made of a composite material.

7. (currently amended) A valve, comprising:
a valve housing having an inlet, an outlet, and a chamber therebetween;
a valve stem slidably mounted in the housing;
a valve plug connected to the valve stem and movable within the chamber;
a packing box provided in the valve housing around the valve stem;
packing disposed in the packing box around the sliding stem; and
a sleeve removably mounted to a portion of the valve stem disposed between the valve plug and the packing, the sleeve having a diameter less than a diameter of the packing box, wherein at least a portion of the sleeve is disposed between an end of the valve plug and the packing box.

8. (original) The valve of claim 7, wherein the sleeve includes first and second halves positioned around the valve stem.

9. (original) The valve of claim 7, further including a snap lock frictionally fit around the sleeve.

10. (original) The valve of claim 7, wherein the valve stem is connected to a valve actuator.

11. (original) The valve of claim 7, wherein the sleeve is manufactured from metal.

12. (original) The valve of claim 7, wherein the sleeve is manufactured from plastic.

13. (original) The valve of claim 7, wherein the sleeve is manufactured from a composite material.

14. (original) The valve of claim 7, wherein the packing is manufactured from tetrafluoroethylene.

15-20. (withdrawn)

21. (previously presented) A valve packing removal device for use in a sliding stem valve having a valve stem, a valve plug coupled to the valve stem, a seal assembly, a packing and a packing box, the valve packing removal device, comprising:

a substantially cylindrical housing having an inner surface for removably mating against a portion of the valve stem disposed between the valve plug and the packing, a first end for engaging a portion of the valve plug, a second end for engaging a portion of the seal assembly, and an outer surface having a diameter less than a diameter of the packing box in which the packing is disposed.

22. (previously presented) The valve of claim 21, wherein the housing includes first and second halves positioned around the valve stem.

23. (previously presented) The valve of claim 21, further including a snap lock frictionally fit around the housing.

24. (previously presented) The valve of claim 21, wherein the housing is manufactured from metal.

25. (previously presented) The valve of claim 21, wherein the housing is manufactured from plastic.

26. (previously presented) The valve of claim 21, wherein the housing is manufactured from a composite material.